



TO: THE TEACHER OF

FROM:

DATE:

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The above named student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing (D/HH) in your class has a cochlear implant(s). For individuals with significant hearing loss, hearing aids are often not able to improve speech understanding. While very powerful hearing aids exist that can increase loudness to very high levels, they may not improve understanding if the sensory cells are too damaged to provide enough information to the brain. Cochlear implants attempt to restore effective hearing ability by bypassing the damaged structures and sensory cells and delivering electrical stimulation directly to the hearing nerve. Cochlear implants are prosthetic devices with internal components that are surgically placed and external components (speech processors) that require fitting and programming.

There are three styles of speech processors:

1. EAR-LEVEL: about the size a large hearing aid with a short cable connected to a headpiece
2. OFF-THE-EAR: about the size of a large pack of gum, clipped to the student's clothing and connected via a long cable that connects to a piece that either magnetically fits on the side of the head (headpiece) OR a configuration where the student uses their ear-level processor but uses a longer cable from their headpiece so it can clip to their clothing
3. ALL-IN-ONE: a large sized headpiece that also houses the electronics of the processor

When used appropriately, many children with cochlear implants have opportunities to hear things that they have never heard before. It is important to remember, however, that this technology does not provide normal hearing or normal speech reception. Adults who have had normal hearing, gone deaf and then used a cochlear implant have reported that they needed to re-learn what things sound like. You may also have a student with two implants (bilateral).

General considerations for students using cochlear implants:

1. Giving the student opportunities to listen is essential. Learning to use their device(s) and to interpret the signal is an ongoing and lengthy process. The Teacher of the D/HH will be able to help you gauge what kinds of listening activities are appropriate for your student.
2. In addition to the cochlear implant, the children may also use a Remote Microphone. This will help bring your voice in more clearly and lessen the effects of background noise.
3. The speech processor(s) is powered by batteries. Extra batteries should be supplied by the children's family.
4. Keep in mind that children hear best on their implant side so be aware of seating arrangements.
5. Since each device has different features (e.g., blinking lights, remote control with diagnostic information) to help you manage your student, contact CASE Audiology for an individualized cheat sheet for troubleshooting.

If you notice the student's grades slowly deteriorating or if there is a sudden change in her/his performance and participation in class, please contact CASE Audiology. We can help you determine to what extent the hearing loss is a factor, and whether or not interventions or accommodations are indicated. We are also available to help you with units you may be presenting to your class related to communication, the ear, hearing, hearing differences, hearing conservation, personal amplification, assistive technology, Deaf Culture, sign language and other Deaf or Hard of Hearing role models.